DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 458 937 PS 029 867

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TITLE Children's Rights: A Quote from Toyohiko Kagawa.
PUB DATE 2001-00-00
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the World Congress on Early Childhood Education (OMEP), (Santiago, Chile, July 31-August 3, 2001).
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Child Relationship; *Child Rearing; *Children; *Childrens Rights; Foreign Countries; *Parent Child Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Japan

ABSTRACT

Toyohiko Kagawa, a Japanese Christian minister nominated for the Nobel Peace prize in 1955, had important contributions to the establishment of children's rights and protection in Japan. This paper reviews Kagawa's personal and educational experiences, his work in the labor movement, his missionary work in Manchuria and China, and his participation in the peasant movement. Probably the first Japanese to speak publicly on children's rights, Kagawa spoke in 1924 on six rights of children: the right to eat, play, sleep, be scolded without anger, have fighting between their parents stopped, and ask parents to stop drinking. These six rights of children are examined, and the paper contends that for children to grow up soundly, adults must recognize these rights. The cultural background to Kagawa's presentation is explained, focusing on changes in the traditional Japanese family since World War II. The paper concludes by noting that Kagawa's views on children's rights are currently receiving greater recognition in Japan, especially by parents who are increasingly recognizing the necessity of scolding children in their upbringing. (KB)

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ED 458 937

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS: A QUOTE FROM TOYOHIKO KAGAWA

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ABSTRACT

Not only was Toyohiko KAGAWA (1888-1958) a Christian pastor, he also was the founder of consumer's cooperative, participating in such a vast area of activities including the labor movement, the peasant movement, and the peace movement, even to the point of being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1955. He wrote more than 200 books and articles both in English and Japanese. Although it is not so well known to many Japanese, he was also passionate about Early Childhood Education, having established kindergartens and daycares in various parts of Japan, and taught at Kobe Women's Seminary, the forerunner of today's Seiwa College, where kindergarten teachers were trained.

It is highly likely that he was the first Japanese ever to mention children's rights. In 1924, he gave a speech on the six rights of children, i.e. the right to eat, play, sleep, be scolded, have fighting of their parents stopped, and ask parents to stop drinking.

The name of Toyohiko KAGAWA was mentioned in the year 2000 version of "the white paper of children in the world" published on December 13 of last year by UNISEF (the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) as one who contributed to the establishment of children's rights and protection. It is probably not a coincidence that the late Prime Minister Keizo OBUCHI and the current Tokyo governor Shintaro ISHIHARA suddenly started to mention his name and words lately in their public appearances.

In this paper, I will explain Kagawa's views on childhood education, and will present my account and analysis on the ongoing situation of today's Japanese childhood education with focus on "Children's Rights" advocated by KAGAWA.

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PREFACE

Today, the name Toyohiko KAGAWA (1888-1958) does not ring a bell to Japanese

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people. The name may rather be more familiar to American Christian educators instead. For instance, in Nashville, Tennessee, there is KAGAWA Museum that exhibits a collection of documents and articles not found in Japan. Before I get into details of this paper entitled "Children's Rights: a quote from Toyohiko KAGAWA", I would like to briefly describe his profile so that I can find out the reason why he asserted such a famous word.

HIS PORFILE

Toyohiko KAGAWA was born in Kobe on July 4, 1888. According to the formal account of his life history, he was 4 years old when both of his parents died of an illness. The head family in Tokushima that took charge of him and his sister went bankrupt soon after, forcing them to live with their uncle. However, the reality I learned from him personally when I attended his church named Ichibaku-kyoukai, one of the churches he established, was as follows:

His real mother was a mistress (his father's second wife). After she died, his father who was the head of the family in Tokushima and his formal wife, took charge of him and his sister. Kagawa often said that he was teased by his half brothers and sisters who lived with him. The mistress mother was called "Mekake." Still I remember that he told us about his childhood when he was called, " me! me! mekake no ko!" So, Kagawa's childhood was a pitiful one.

. But I think that his miserable experiences in his young age brought about his great works.

At Tokushima Junior High, he took English lesson from C. A. Rogan, a Christian missionary, and received baptism from Dr. H. W. Mayas, another missionary. In 1905, he graduated from Tokushima Junior High and entered the Theology Department of Meiji Gakuin High. Then he transferred to Kobe Seminary because of their kind invitation. After being diagnosed for tuberculosis, he started to write "Innocent as Doves", the first version of "Across the death line", while recovering at a sanatorium. In 1909, he moved to the slums at Fukiai Shinkawa in Kobe and started Christian mission work on the street. In 1911, he graduated from Kobe Seminary. A year later, he opened a restaurant in the slums for the poor called "Paradise." In 1913 he passed the missionary exam. Then he married Haru Shiba who was 25 years old at that time. The next year, he left for the U.S. to study at Princeton. In 1916, he received B.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary.

In 1917, he came back to Japan and started a free traveling clinic in the slums of Kobe. The same year, the Fellowship Union in Kobe and Osaka was organized and Kagawa was recommended for a board of trustees of the Kobe branch. In 1919, he organized the Kansai laborers' association of the Fellowship Union and assumed the director's position.

In 1920, he published "Across the Death Line" that would become a best seller. In 1921, on the occasion of the labor dispute at Mitsubishi shipyard in Kawasaki, he became an executive committee member and participated in the demonstration on the street. The demonstrators clashed with the police and Kagawa was arrested. The same year, he established "Friends of Jesus" in Nara. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Fellowship Union in Tokyo, he became a central committee member. He also founded the Japanese Peasant Union. In 1922, he started his own magazine "The Pillar of Cloud" for Friends of Jesus, opened the Osaka Labor School and became the principal. After the Kanto (Tokyo)earth quake, he set up a tent booth to start a rescue operation in Tokyo. In 1924, he went to the U.S. at the invitation of the American University Union. In 1925, he established the Japan Mission for the Treatment of Lepers (Japan MTL). In 1926, upon the inauguration of the Osaka Spinning Union, he became the chief leader. He established the party of farmers and laborers at Osaka YMCA and became a central executive committee member. In 1927, he went to Shanghai as a Japanese representative for Christian Conference of Economy. In 1928, he obtained the approval for a financial institution for the poor called the Nakanogo Credit Union, started a nationalwide mission, and formed the nation wide Anti-War Union. In 1931, he went to China for a mission work, then to the U.S. at the invitation of the International YMCA Conference, and published the novel "A Grain of Wheat". In 1934, he went to the Philippines for a mission work at the invitation of the Philippine Christian Union. In 1935, he went on a lecture tour in Australia and traveled to the U.S. for the fourth time. In 1936, he gave a speech at the International Conference of the Sunday School Union held in Oslo, Norway. In 1938, he went to India as a lecturer of the International Conference of Missionary. In 1940, he went to the U.S. as a member of the Christian Peace Mission.

In 1942, he devoted himself to a missionary work in local areas and various parts of Manchuria, north-east of China. In 1943, he was detained at Aioi-bashi, Kobe, for the reason of his Anti-War Ideas. In 1944, he went to China again as a mission member.

In 1945, after the end of the War, he assumed a counseling position in the cabinet, organized the corporative union of Japan and became it's head. In 1947, he was recommended for the head of the National Peasant Union. In 1949, he went to England as a special lecturer of the International Missionary Association and the International Conference of Christian Educators and started his mission work in Europe. In 1954, he went to the U.S. to attend the Second International Conference of Christian Church.

In 1955, he was recommended for the Nobel Peace Prize and appointed as an advisor of the Socialist Party. In 1957, he served as a chairman of the Third Asian Conference of World Federation held in Kyoto. In 1959, after the mission tour in Kansai area, he collapsed while on his way to Shikoku. The next year, on April 23, he passed away at the age of 72.

HIS ACHIEVEMENTS

He wrote more than 260 books both in both English and Japanese. Although it may not be well known to many Japanese, he was also passionate about Childhood Education. Indeed, in addition to the above-mentioned activities, he established kindergartens and daycares and taught at Kobe Women's Seminary, the forerunner of today's Seiwa College where I taught as a professor for more than 30 years. We can clearly see his concern about the nurturing of kindergarten teachers and their teachings.

Along with his mission works, he gave many public speeches. It is likely that he was the first Japanese ever to mention children's right in public. The record shows that on June 9, 1924, on the occasion of his conference speech entitled "A Lecture Talk On Protection Of Children" at Sarueura, Fukagawa, Tokyo, he lectured on children's rights. More precisely, he talked about the six rights of children, i.e. the right to eat, play, sleep, be scolded, have fighting of their parents stopped, and ask parents to stop drinking.

"CHILDREN'S RIGHTS"

The following is in the English translation of his speech concerning "Children's Rights".

First of all, children have a right to eat. They were not born to die young or get abused. In the light of common sense, it is too obvious that a newborn should grow in safe, loving, and healthy conditions, just as we all know that it is unnatural to trample upon or cut down flowers in the garden. It then goes without saying that it is unnatural to abuse or starve children who were born in the nature of God without any malice, that the parents have the responsibility to provide food to the children they produced themselves so that their children can grow in good health, and that children have a right to eat.

Next, children have a right to play. In the city area, a large group of people lives in a small house together so that children cannot play enough inside of their residence. If they go outside, there are dust and wind as well as heavy traffic, so much so that they don't have place where they can play in peace. If the parents and teachers tell children not to go outside but to stay inside of their dark house without doing anything, we must say that they are really in harm's way. We must also say that this kind of situation will never produce cheerful and healthy children because of the obvious reason.

Children are never happy in the crowd. They are happy whey they are in the splendid nature where they can release enough of their physical desire they possess since their birth. Let them go to nearby wilderness. If they can yell and play on the grass as much as they want, they will learn to be infinitely thankful for plain rice balls and can joyfully come home with wholesome physical fatigue. It is firstly the parents who let children

enjoy their right to play.

People don't get tired to the point of not being able to sleep. Since rest will give them renewed power, they must sleep. Children need more sleeping time than adults, but some parents who don't know how to bring up their children try to forcibly keep them stay awake when they are deadly sleepy, exhausting them even more. Children have a right to demand sleep for their own healthy development.

Then, children have a right to be scolded. Of course, when they do something wrong, they must be scolded. Children who are not scolded for whatever they do will develop a selfish character and become out of control. But, there is a big difference between "scolding" and "getting angry". To scold children is an act of love toward them. Since you worry about them, love them, and try to bring them up to be dignified adults, you uproot their bad nature and correct their wrong behavior without ever becoming angry. Unfortunately, however, there are far more people who get angry with children than those who scold them in the correct way. Those people become angry because they cannot control their explosive temper. Children will listen quietly to their parents when they get scolded for what they have done really wrong. But if the parents were only angry, they would think that their parents do not really love them and would start to keep distance from the parents. Kagawa said "as for myself, when I scold my own child, I sit with him alone, facing each other in silence. Since nothing would be more painful for him than sitting quietly without moving, he would certainly realize his wrongdoing and repent. So, you should never rush to strike or beat your children. You are not scolding them. You are only angry."

For children to grow up soundly, we must recognize their rights. If they have done anything wrong, they need to be corrected of their wrongdoings just as they would have a right to be recognized for their good deeds. Nevertheless, parents tend to listen to their own children only when they have had a brawl with other children in the neighborhood. The parents will then probably listen to their own children more attentively. And even if it was their own children who were to blame, the parents would hardly recognize it. Indeed, very few parents will scold their children upon such recognition. But this is not a good trend. Children have a right to be scolded just as parents have a right to scold them. If a child is left out without being told right from wrong or without ever being scolded nor corrected for whatever he does, he is not a cherished child. Rather, he would be an ill-treated child in double senses; his right to be scolded was not exercised enough and his father was negligent in scolding him enough.

Children have a right to ask their parents not to fight each other. The family disaccord always creates cold atmosphere and annihilates love. When there is no love on the part of the parents, there is no love for children, causing them to gradually distance themselves away from their home.

The eighth children's right was to have a right to ask their parents not to drink. In the Kobe's slum at that time, there are so many persons who drank and beat children.

Kagawa deplored this situation.

THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND IN KAGAWA'S PRESENTATION

The above citation is a part of the speech Kagawa presented. Let us explain the cultural background in that presentation.

Before the War, a traditional Japanese family meant a large family where the paternal (and grand paternal) authority was absolute. Prior to presenting themselves in front of the house head, the children and grand children had to sit down in the traditional Japanese manner in front of the door while waiting, and they were never allowed to enter the room until after saluting at the door with their two hands on the floor. The head of the house had to play the role of the scolder as one who had the most authority in the household, and the entire household always accepted his scolding. The idea deep rooted there was "That's a shame to the family." In those days, the culture based on the feeling of shame was still predominant in the aristocratic Samurai society as pointed out in the books written by Ruth Benedict.

Today, the Japanese children are happy to eat, play, and sleep, though there are so many nuclear families and grand parents no longer live with their children. So, they meet their own grand children only occasionally. On the other hand, the young parents no longer scold their children. The birth rate is lowering, while we have more and more single-child families. It seems that the children have become a king of their family. Before the War, sometimes we could not eat enough, but we had a notion that the father is strict and the mother benevolent. Today, the traditional strict father has disappeared. Instead, there are benevolent fathers and strict mothers. And it is the mother who now plays the role of scolding. Moreover, when children have done something wrong, the mother does not really scold but gets angry. We even see on TV a program entitled "How to scold and praise your children." It used to be the grand parents who taught the young couple how to scold and praise. Nowadays, old people tend to live alone in retirement homes.

Children like to eat and play, but hate to be scolded. All of them try as much as possible not to be scolded or angered at. Nevertheless, it is their right to be scolded. Through scolding, they learn the rules of the society and the way to be sociable with their counterparts, and grow to be a member of the family, the society and the nation.

POSTSCRIPT

Today, people are paying much attention to Kagawa' word "Children's rights ". We think that the recognition shows the conscience level of today's Japanese adults who

realize the necessity of scolding children in their upbringing. Today, our children have the rights to eat, play and sleep, but we believe that the scolded children in the proper manner will become good citizens. In finishing this paper, I would like to tell the young readers the importance of learning from our precursor Toyohiko KAGAWA.

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